

FWP Commission Agenda Item Cover Sheet

Meeting Date: November 8, 2012

Agenda Item: 2012-13 Wolf Trapping Regulations

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Approval of Final Rule

Time for this Presentation: 10 minutes

Background: The Commission finalized regulations for the first Montana wolf trapping season at the July 2012 meeting. The trapping season framework included a variety of restrictions, some of which were intended to minimize the take of non-target species. Additionally, the Commission adopted a requirement that Montana trappers would be required to complete a wolf trapping education course. Part of the course includes material detailing various measures to minimize capture of non-target species. The measures include a recommendation to set wolf trap pan tensions to a minimum of 8 pounds. This is a particularly effective approach that would minimize non-target captures, particularly of smaller carnivores including lynx, marten, and fisher. FWP proposes requiring trappers to set wolf trap pan tensions to a minimum of 8 pounds. This is arguably the single most effective method to preclude incidental capture of lynx and other small carnivores in wolf traps.

The primary non-target concern is lynx, which is a federally listed species. FWP proposes adopting this restriction only within a specific area that includes federally identified lynx habitat.

Public Involvement Process & Results: The public comment period on the proposal will extend through 5 p.m., Monday, November 5. As of Tuesday, October 23, FWP received 28 comments. The comments revealed both support and opposition to the proposed regulation.

Alternatives and Analysis: The Commission could adopt a lighter or heavier wolf pan tension standard. A heavier standard might occasionally preclude wolf capture. Eight pounds is at the upper end of recognized pan tension settings for wolf traps. A lighter standard would allow capture of smaller carnivores, including lynx, precluding the effectiveness of the restriction.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: FWP recommends adopting an 8 pound minimum trap pan tension setting for wolf traps set in the proposed area which includes identified lynx habitat in Montana.

Proposed Motion: I move to adopt the proposed pan tension requirement of for the 2012-2013 wolf trapping season, as proposed by FWP.
